



Natural Resources Conservation Service
South Central Regional Office
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P.O. Box 6567
Fort Worth, Texas 76115

SUBJECT: LTP– Regional Policy – EQIP Approval
Authority Process

DATE: June 10, 2003

TO: State Conservationists
South Central and Midwest Regions

FILE CODE: 300-19

FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

Section 1466.20(e) of the final EQIP Rule requires the Regional Conservationist to be the approval authority for any contracts with a total cost-share amount greater than \$100,000.

This requirement results in a need for the Regional Conservationist to have enough information on those applications and proposed contracts prior to signing the CCC-1200 form in order to ensure proper accountability.

The following process will be used for carrying out these responsibilities in the Midwest and South Central Regions:

STEP 1 After ranking process and evaluations have taken place **and prior to notification of applicants selected for receiving contracts (including notification of acceptance letter)**, the Regional Conservationist will receive a faxed, emailed, or overnight mail copy of the applicable ranking sheets, listing of applicants in ranking order, a copy of the signed CCC-1200 form (application), applicable supporting documents (including maps). The Regional Conservationist will also receive a signed copy of the attached EQIP Contract Check Sheet with Section A (Application) properly filled out for all proposed contracts with cost-share totals of \$100,000 or greater. **In addition to the application and contract information described above, the mailing address of the FSA Service Center office (street address) applicable to the specific proposed contract, will also be required.** The Regional Conservationist will over-night mail or Fed-Ex an “original” signature to that FSA office so that it is on file as required by policy.

For those States which have the applicants sign both as applicant and as contract signature, the submittal will also include all materials and information required in Step 3, including a complete EQIP Check Sheet, signed by the Designated Conservationist and the State Conservationist. In these cases, Step 1, 2 and 3 are combined. The process is still the same and the time requirements are still the same. These States are reminded that although they have had the participant sign the CCC-1200 and Appendix as a contract, it is not an obligated contract until the Regional Conservationist has reviewed and approved by signing the applicable CCC-1200.

STEP 2

The Regional Conservationist will review these materials and confer with the respective State Conservationist to address any additional issues that the provided information does not cover. If the Regional Conservationist agrees with the applicants selected for contract(s) the respective State Conservationist will be informed, in writing via fax, to proceed with the notification process and development of the contract. If the review by the Regional Conservationist reveals any shortcomings in the ranking process or related processes, he will immediately discuss those shortcomings with the respective State Conservationist and an agreement on solutions will be made and carried out by the respective State Conservationist. After “agreed to” solutions have been implemented, Step 1 is started over. The Regional Conservationist will respond, either in agreement or with details of shortcomings within 72 hours of receipt of documents and information listed in Step 1.

STEP 3

Once the contract(s) that have total cost-share amounts of \$100,000 or greater have been developed, reviewed by the appropriate Designated Conservationist and State Conservationist, and signed by appropriate program participants, a copy of the signed CCC-1200 form and appendix will be emailed or faxed to the Regional Conservationist along with a signed copy of a properly completed EQIP Contract Check Sheet showing that all protocols and processes have been properly implemented. The Regional Conservationist will again review the contract(s) and either provide approval signature to the CCC-1200 form or respond back to the respective State Conservationist as to why he will not sign it within 72 hours of receipt of the contracting materials. Incomplete or improperly filled out EQIP Contract Check Sheets or unsigned check sheets will only delay this process. If the Regional Conservationist will not sign the contract(s), the respective State Conservationist will be immediately contacted and resolution(s) to the issues that cause the disapproval will be worked out. Once resolution is agreed to and implemented, Step 3 starts over again and if properly completed, should result in going on to Step 4.

STEP 4

The Regional Conservationist will sign approved contracts and will immediately provide the respective State Conservationist with a faxed or electronic signature if these methods are approved by OGC. Otherwise, he will provide an original signature on the appropriate CCC-1200 form and over-night (FedEx) the document(s) to the respective State Conservationist.

STEP 5

If needed, major modifications will require prior approval of the Regional Conservationist on all EQIP contracts with total cost-share amounts greater than \$100,000. This is applicable to both contracts that originally exceeded \$100,000 in total cost share obligations as well as contracts that did not exceed \$100,000 originally but the modification increases the total cost share obligation to greater than \$100,000. Appropriate documentation justifying the modification will be

provided to the Regional Conservationist in a timely manner. Steps 3 and 4 above will be carried out for each major modification, including proper completion of, signing and submittal of the EQIP Contract Check Sheet.

This regional policy is effective immediately. If you have any questions, please call Gary O'Neill in the Midwest Region or Carl Hutcherson in the South Central Region.

/S/

HUMBERTO HERNANDEZ
Regional Conservationist

Attachment

cc:

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